

Finch & C^o



TWO WEST AUSTRALIAN CARVED EMU EGGS

TWO WEST AUSTRALIAN CARVED EMU EGGS, ONE DEPICTING AN ABORIGINAL POSSUMHUNT AND THE OTHER AN ABORIGINE HUNTER SPEARING EMU

CIRCA 1870-90

SIZE: A: 14.5CM HIGH, 8.5CM DIA – 5¾ INS HIGH, 3¼ INS DIA

B: 14CM HIGH, 9CM DIA – 5½ INS HIGH, 3½ INS DIA

LITERATURE

ONE OF THE TWO FLIGHTLESS BIRDS IN AUSTRALIA THE EMU IS AMONG THE COUNTRY'S BEST-KNOWN BIRDS. ONCE THEY WERE HUNTED WIDELY AND EMUS STILL REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT FOOD SOURCE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES LIVING TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES. THE INQUISITIVE NATURE OF THESE BIRDS WAS OFTEN THEIR DOWNFALL, AS HUNTERS WOULD MIMIC THEIR CALL ATTRACTING THEM CLOSE ENOUGH TO CLUB OR SPEAR.

IN NEW SOUTH WALES, THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF THE 19TH CENTURY ENJOYED A RICH AND INEXHAUSTIBLE LARDER, WHICH INCLUDED FLYING FOX, EMU, BRUSH TURKEY, EGGS, PLATYPUS, ECHIDNA, BANDICOOT AND POSSUMS. THE POSSUMSKINS ALSO PROVIDED MATERIAL FOR RUGS AND CLOAKS, WHICH WERE WORN DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. THE CLOAKS WERE CONSTRUCTED FROM MANY SKINS SCRAPED AND SEWN TOGETHER WITH THE FUR TURNED INWARDS TOWARDS THE BODY. THE OUTER SURFACE WAS OFTEN INCISED AND DECORATED WITH RED OCHRE GEOMETRIC PATTERNS.